

FEMA REGION V

short notes on planning # 7

DEVELOPING PHASED APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY MITIGATION PLANS

Community mitigation plans, by definition, are plans for all areas at risk from natural hazards in a community (risks may also include technological hazards). Frequently, however, larger communities, such as a county, do not have the funding, time or other resources to complete a community-wide plan. This should not be considered as a roadblock to completing a mitigation plan.

A phased approach can be taken in preparing the plan. With a phased approach the hazard identification is completed for the entire community (see guidance entitled **DETERMINING DAMAGE POTENTIAL**), but the risk assessment and the determination of mitigation actions is phased over a period of time.

Once the areas at risk are determined, along with the impact, your planning team is in position to decide those locations that should be studied initially and those areas that may be studied later. Generally, residential and commercial areas that have a history of being severely damaged, critical facilities and repetitive loss structures are included in the first phase. Later phases may include areas that are at risk but have only suffered minor damages (an example would be houses that have had only a few inches of basement flooding) or have suffered no damage thus far.

Areas that have not been developed should not be ignored. These areas should be included in the first phase of the plan. A review of current laws is necessary to determine if the regulations are adequate to keep damages from increasing. If they are not adequate, then the community should look at amending local

regulations or looking at other options to reduce damages such as keeping the undeveloped areas as open space.

For further guidance regarding phasing a plan, contact your State Hazard Mitigation Officer's office or the FEMA Regional Office. Be prepared to discuss your community's circumstances. Topics that usually are discussed include how large of an area is impacted by the hazards affecting your community, current development trends, and information regarding existing development.